

**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program  
Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,  
River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Subregion:** NORTH **County:** LASSEN

**Applicant:** MOUNTAIN MEADOWS CONSERVANCY

**Project Title:** ROBBER'S CREEK MILL SITE "HOW TO" GUIDE

**Reference Number:** SNC 070114

**PROJECT SCOPE**

This project would focus on identifying and describing the steps needed to address clean-up and re-use of an industrial lumber mill or mine site, ultimately developing a "How To" guide that would be useful for other communities in the Sierra Nevada faced with similar issues. Specific actions include:

- Conducting research needed to create a long-term strategy for acquisition, restoration, preservation and recreation development of abandoned lumber mill or mine sites;
- Partnering with public agencies and consultants to develop a comprehensive community- and policy-based strategy that addresses identified concerns;
- Developing a "How To" guide for use by others, including interactive mapping tools available in Google Earth;
- Making the guide available online, so that communities throughout the region can access the guide and learn how to use the interface.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<b>DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>
Research liability issues for mill/mine site reclamation and due diligence	July 2008
Prepare How To Guide	March 2009
Develop Google Earth maps	June 2009
Distribute Guide to public & partners via the Internet	December 2009
<b>Final Report/Final Payment Request</b>	<b>December 31, 2009</b>

**PROJECT COSTS**

<b>PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES</b>	<b>TOTAL SNC FUNDING</b>
Research and mapping	\$16,650
Project Development, including Land Use Specialist to report on issues raised by mill site reclamation projects	\$1,350
How to Guide research, drafting and dissemination	\$30,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>

**Letters of Support:**  
None received.

**Recommendation:**  
Staff recommendation is to fund the project at the requested level of \$48,000.

## Project Name: Robber's Creek Mill Site "How-to" Guide

### 2. Project Summary

The project proposed by the Mountain Meadows Conservancy ("MMC") includes completing the initial research necessary to develop a "how-to" guide for the reuse of former lumber mill sites in the Sierra Nevada. This research is also needed to create a long term strategy for the eventual acquisition, restoration, preservation, and recreation development of a specific local site, the Robber's Creek Mill Site ("RCMS"). The successful completion of this final project will protect the water quality for adjacent communities, preserve the existing wetlands habitat, and improve the local economy, as well as providing an incentive for such efforts in other Sierra Nevada communities. MMC will partner with several public agencies and pro bono consultants to develop a comprehensive community and policy-based strategy and "how-to" guide for former lumber mill sites throughout the region. (*See Attachments A, B, & C for maps of the RCMS location*).

This project was inspired by a former lumber mill site, located adjacent to Westwood, CA an old mill town in the northern Sierra Nevada in Lassen County. The Red River Lumber Company founded the town in 1912, and operated until the mill's closure in 1956. The Company's activities included milling, then eventually moved into light manufacturing of wood crates, flakeboard, telephone poles using copper treatment, Venetian blinds, and veneer paneling.<sup>1</sup> Today, the "mill site" is home to a wetland teeming with wildlife and an amazing array of bird species, yet several remaining rustic structures are evidence of the site's history. At present date, the mill site has not been comprehensively tested for contaminants.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the water's possible contamination could threaten the health of the surrounding area, including habitat for the threatened and endangered species in this area. By developing a "how-to" guide, MMC will develop the resources to address this specific site, while creating a valuable tool for the region.

The main issue that MMC seeks to address is how local communities in the Sierra can work together to reuse former mining and timber mill sites by better understanding and addressing suspected water quality contamination from historic mining or timber activities. The strategy developed through this process would be compiled into a "how-to" guide and disseminated to communities throughout the Sierra Nevada region who desire mill reuse but face similar water quality issues arising from historic uses. Former lumber mill sites are often located in upper watersheds. Thus, the dissemination of a reuse "how-to" guide to these communities has the potential to vastly improve watershed health by providing an incentive for restoration projects throughout the Sierra Nevada region.

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<sup>1</sup> Historical photos of the Red River Lumber Mill provide documentation of these activities and are available upon request.

<sup>2</sup> Pacific Municipal Consultants, *The Red River Lumber Company Westwood Mill Site Reuse Analysis*, 2002. Pacific Municipal Consultants ("PMC") was hired by the County to look at reuse options for the mill site. PMC completed a report, documenting the substantial number of threatened and endangered species spotted in or near the mill site, and collected community input from Westwood residents about what would be the best use of the site. Their primary recommendations were to seek funding to test the mill site for potential contaminants and to create a recreation opportunity to support the fledgling economy of Westwood.] *But see also*, California Department of Toxic Substances Control. *Report: Red River Lumber Site*. Web publication. <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/search.asp> (Accessed December 28, 2007), *stating that no contaminants were found*.